

PRC - Middle East Negotiations

Thursday, 17 May, 0930-1100

TAB

- A Egypt: Negotiating Stance on the West Bank and Gaza
- B Israel: Preparing for Autonomy Negotiations
- C Palestinian Views on the Autonomy Negotiations
- D The West Bank: The Political Setting
- E The Gaza Strip: A Primer
- F Some Thoughts on Bringing the Palestinians into the
Autonomy Negotiations (previously sent to you by Bob Ames)
- G Background Cables
- H Updated Settlements Map: West Bank & the Gaza Strip

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC #2518-79

15 May 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment *RRB*
FROM:
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for
Near East and South Asia
SUBJECT: PRC Meeting on Middle East Negotiations, 17 May 1979

1. Action Requested: None. For your information to prepare for the PRC meeting at 0930 hours on Thursday, 17 May.

2. Background: Although we have received no agenda, the PRC presumably will discuss Israeli and Egyptian attitudes toward, and preparations for, the West Bank/Gaza negotiations which are scheduled to begin at the end of next week. The meeting probably will also review the negotiations strategy to be followed by the US team. I would guess that Ambassador Leonard will attend; he was named this past weekend to be Strauss' deputy, and will lead the US team until Strauss becomes involved full time later this summer.

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3. State and NSC are said to be preparing a paper and agenda for this meeting, which we will forward to you when they are available. We will also provide you talking points on the latest Middle East developments, in case you are called on for a current update.

4. Attached are the following background materials:

Tab A - Egypt: Negotiating Stance on the West Bank and Gaza

Tab B - Israel: Preparing for Autonomy Negotiations

Tab C - Palestinian Views on the Autonomy Negotiations

Tab D - The West Bank: The Political Setting

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Tab E - The Gaza Strip: A Primer

Tab F - Some Thoughts on Bringing the Palestinians into the Autonomy Negotiations (previously sent to you by Bob Ames)

Tab G - Background Cables

Tab H - Updated Settlements Map: West Bank & the Gaza Strip

5. For your information, the only West Bank negotiations production project that is still underway at the moment is an overlay to the revised settlements map (Tab H) showing other Israeli-claimed state lands in the West Bank such as military camps and military training areas. This OGCR overlay (with input from OIA, OSR, and OPA) should graphically show the 30% of the West Bank the Israelis may claim is exempt from autonomy negotiations. Our target date is 21 May to provide this overlay to NEA at State.

6. John Helgerson of OPA will accompany you to the meeting.



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Attachment
Briefing Book

OPA/NESA:JHelgerson:csj
Distribution:

Orig - Addee
1 - DDCI
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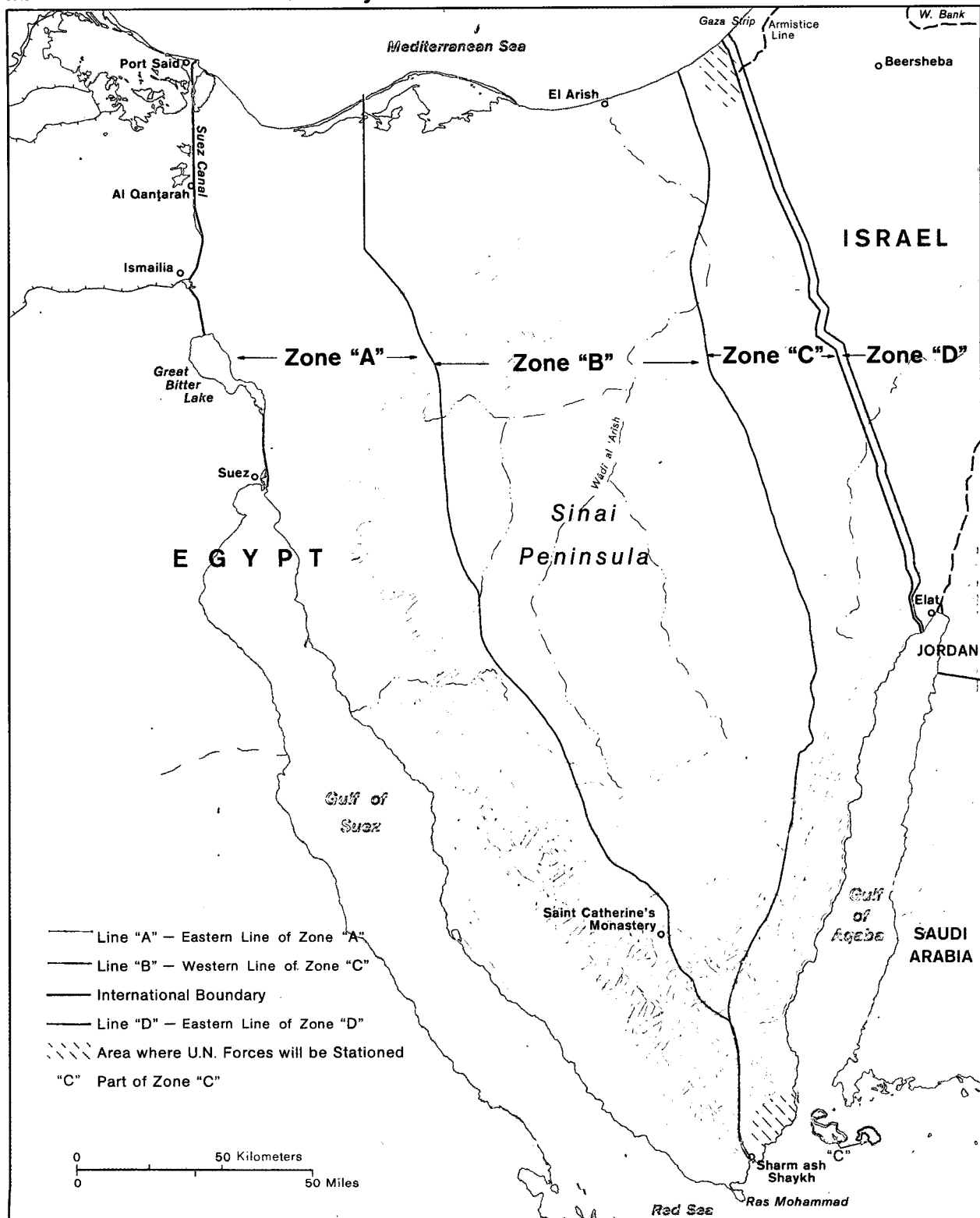
PRC : Middle East Negotiations
17 May 1979

attended by DDIC : John Helgeson

Date

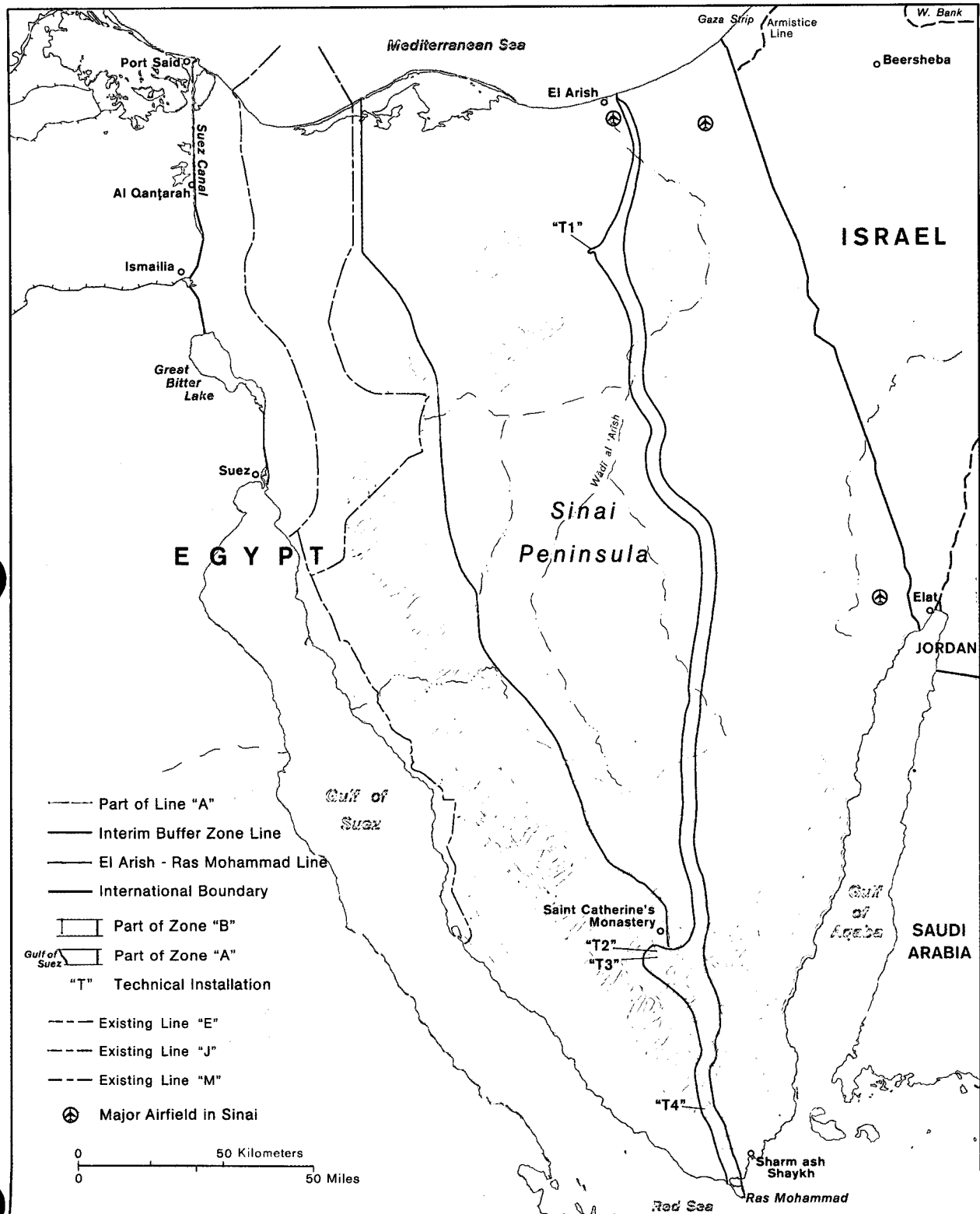
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MAP 1 - International Boundary and the Lines of the Zones



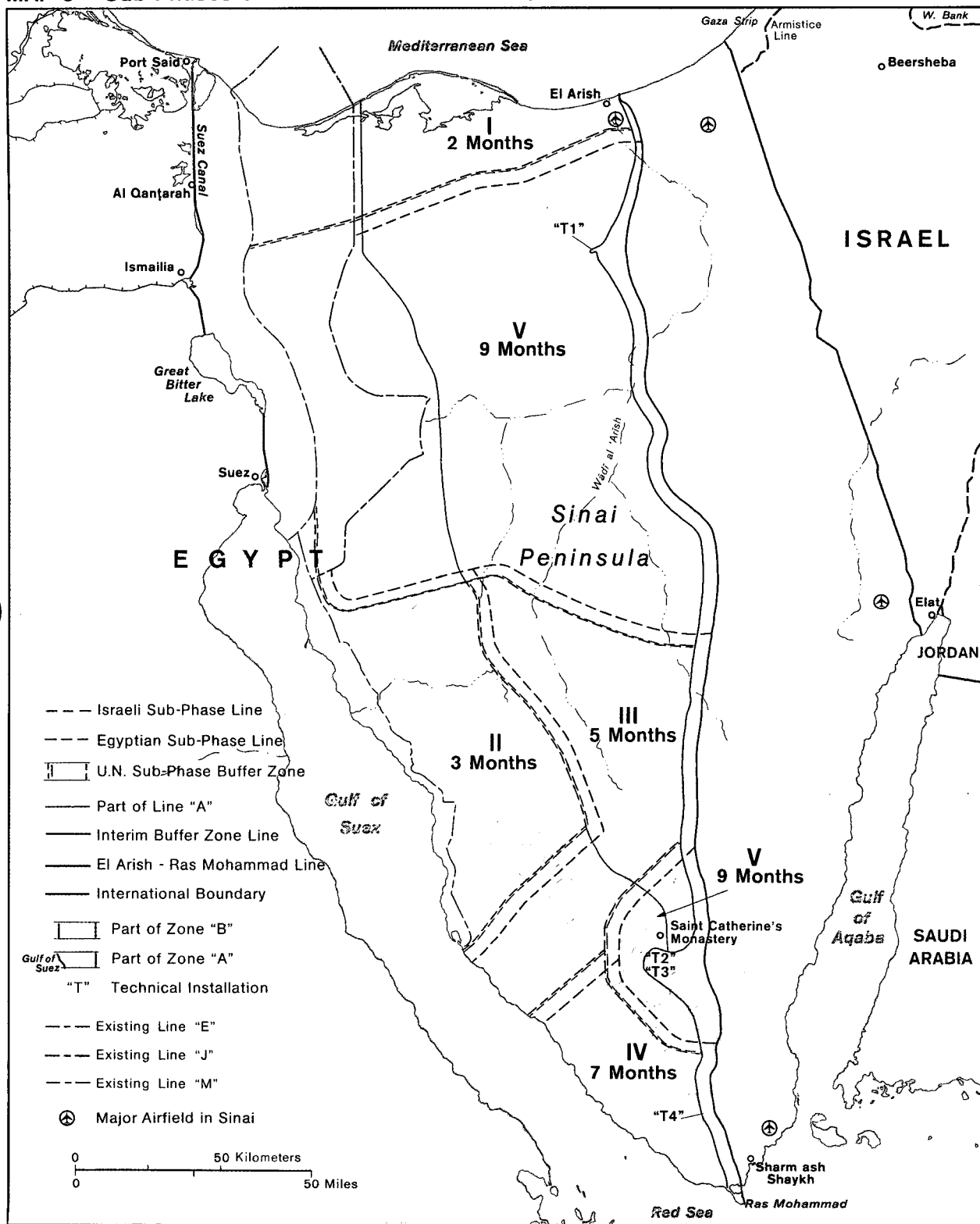
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MAP 2 - Lines and Zones Effective when Israeli Forces are on the El Arish - Ras Mohammad Line



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MAP 3 - Sub-Phases of Withdrawal to the El Arish-Ras Mohammad Line



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14 May 1979

TALKING POINTS

SUBJECT: Palestinian Views on the Autonomy Negotiations

At this point there is no indication that any important Palestinian, in or out of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is preparing to participate actively in the autonomy negotiations. Moderate Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have expressed privately some interest in the talks to US officials but are not willing to risk joining the discussions. A few minor figures in the occupied territories may be prepared to come forward, but they lack credibility as spokesmen for the Palestinians.

- The PLO leadership has denounced the talks and has threatened to retaliate against any Palestinian who participates. Yasir Arafat and other PLO leaders describe the negotiations as a sham, and charge that at best they will result in a Palestinian "Bantustan." Arafat continues to reiterate the position that the PLO is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- Moreover, Arafat is constrained from entering the talks by pressure from PLO radicals and hardline Arab regimes such as Iraq and Syria.

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- The PLO will probably step up its terrorist attacks on Israeli targets in hope of undermining the talks.
- If the autonomy negotiations result in elections to establish a self-governing authority in the occupied territories, the PLO may quietly allow its supporters in the West Bank and Gaza to participate, even while the organization continues to attack the process. A sensitive clandestine report suggests Arafat intends to do so because he calculates that PLO supporters would win--as they did in the 1976 municipal elections--and could then declare an independent Palestinian state.
- Pro-PLO mayors in the West Bank, who control almost all major towns, have publicly repudiated the autonomy talks and are not likely to change this policy unless Israel agrees to major concessions including a freeze on all settlement activity and recognition of the PLO.
- Moderate politicians in the West Bank, many of whom are pro-Jordanian, have expressed interest in the talks but are not prepared to risk the PLO's wrath at this point. They would also like Israel to cease settlement activity and deal with the PLO. At a minimum, they will want Jordan to participate directly or indirectly in the talks before they are willing to come forward.

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The West Bank: The Political Setting

A Research Paper

Secret

December 1978

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Center

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The West Bank: The Political Setting (U)

A Research Paper

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The author of this paper is [] Office
of Regional and Political Analysis. Comments and
queries are welcome and may be directed to []

[] on []

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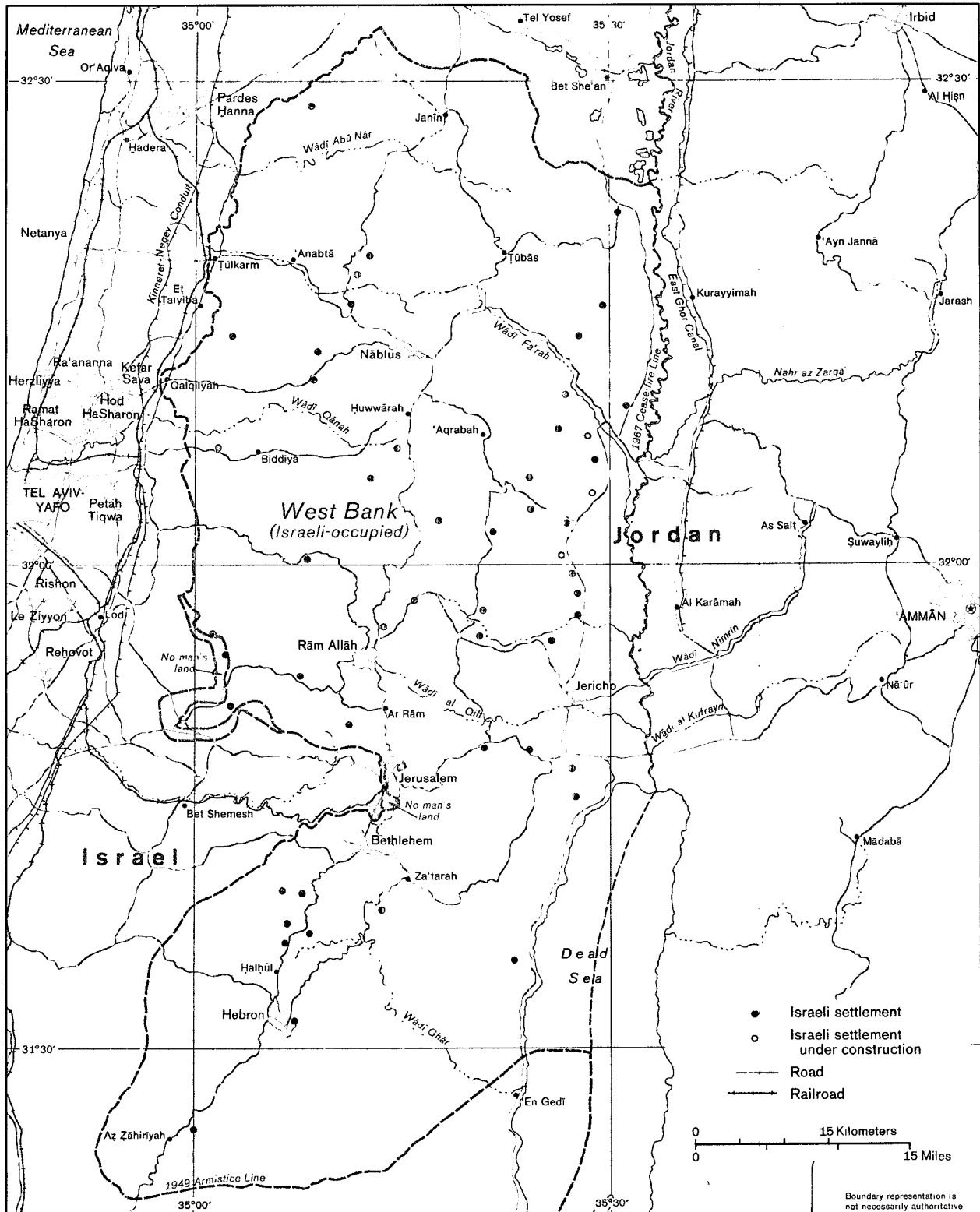
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The West Bank: The Political Setting (U)

Key Judgments

The influence of the handful of landowning families who have dominated West Bank politics since the Ottoman period has been eroded, but the political vacuum left by their decline has not been filled by any other regionwide political institutions. As a result, West Bank political activity is concentrated at the local level—village and municipal—where kinship ties play an important role. This concentration of political activity at the local level has reinforced longstanding regional, personal, and religious antagonisms, making it difficult for West Bankers to reach any degree of unanimity on political matters. The resulting disunity is compounded by West Bankers' emotional attachment to the Palestine Liberation Organization as a symbol of Palestinian unity and a reluctance to go against PLO wishes. (S)

West Bank



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The West Bank: The Political Setting (U)

Introduction

The West Bank—referred to as Judea and Samaria by Prime Minister Begin—is comprised of what were, from 1950 to 1967, the Jordanian governates of Hebron and Nablus in central Palestine.¹ The Arab population of the West Bank is about 700,000, approximately 95 percent of whom are Sunni Muslim; the remainder belong to a variety of Christian sects. The area of the West Bank is about 2,270 square miles, or slightly larger than the area of Delaware. Population is concentrated along the western slopes of the central mountain range and in the 22 UNRWA

¹ A third former Jordanian governate, East or "Arab" Jerusalem, was annexed to Israel shortly after its occupation in 1967. Most West Bankers look on East Jerusalem as an integral part of the area and view the Israeli annexation as invalid. For the purpose of this paper, however, East Jerusalem and its estimated 96,000 Arab inhabitants will not be considered part of the West Bank. Israeli Government statistics for the West Bank, which are used throughout this paper, do not include East Jerusalem. (U)

camps, which house some 65,000 refugees. Although there are several large towns,² an estimated 67 percent of the inhabitants of the West Bank live in villages of less than 800 people. Even the urban areas retain a conservative, small town atmosphere. Hebron, the West Bank's second largest city, until recently refused to allow movies to be shown, and religious leaders strongly opposed the installation of sidewalks and streetlights. (S)

The economy is based on agriculture, mostly small intensively cultivated holdings ranging in size from 15 to 100 dunams (4 dunams equal about 1 acre). The

² The Israeli military government estimates the population of the area's four largest cities in 1976 as follows: Nablus 70,000; Hebron 50,000; Bethlehem 20,000; and Ramallah 17,000. (U)



West Bank Village

gross national product grew at an average annual rate of 14 percent between 1973 and 1976, largely on the strength of remittances from workers in Israel and the Arab oil-producing countries. (U)

Industrial development is constrained by a small market, lack of natural resources, and political uncertainties which discourage capital investment. Industry is found chiefly in Nablus, the area's largest city. Manufacturing is devoted largely to soap, matches, and olive oil, but there is also a small handicrafts industry. Most factories employ fewer than 50 workers. (U)

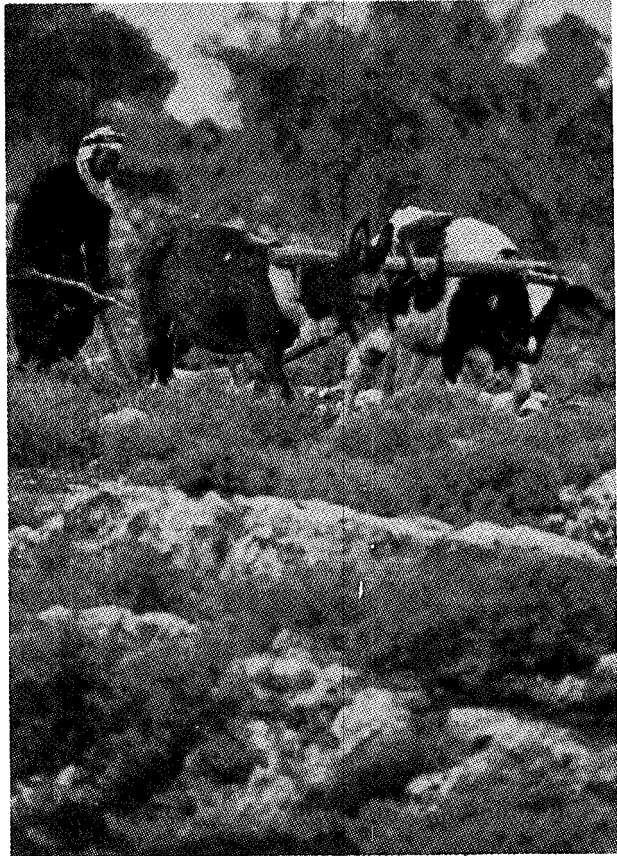
A key factor in the West Bank's economy—and one that has important political ramifications—is the availability of jobs for Arab workers in Israel. One-third of the West Bank labor force is estimated to be employed in Israel, mostly in the construction sector. Precise figures are not available, however, because many workers enter Israel illegally. Few West Bank workers live in Israel for any length of time. Most commute daily to their jobs, retaining their ties to the traditional village social structure. (U)

The high level of employment has visibly increased the standard of living. More than 80 percent of West Bank families own a radio and 30 percent, a television set. Automobiles are increasingly common. (U)

The Israeli occupation has also provided expanded employment opportunities for women, many of whom are entering the labor force for the first time. Many West Bank women are employed, chiefly in agriculture or working as seamstresses in their own homes for Israeli clothing firms. (U)

While unskilled jobs are readily available, there are few opportunities for skilled workers. As a consequence, many of the best trained West Bankers leave the area³ in search of jobs in the Arabian peninsula. Exact figures are not available, but some reports assert that as many as 20,000 left the area last year. The emigres retain ties to the West Bank, however, and return annually to have their passports and other

³ A recent survey of graduates of vocational training schools in the West Bank, for example, showed that 45 percent found work in Israel, 30 percent got jobs in the West Bank economy, and 25 percent emigrated to jobs abroad. (U)



The arid, rocky landscape of the West Bank

documents revalidated. This emigration of educated professionals and skilled workers deprives the West Bank of its potentially most able political leadership. (U)

Traditional Politics

For the past two centuries, West Bank politics have been dominated by a handful of influential families, whose wealth and political power were based on land ownership, and on a system of alliances with smaller, less powerful families throughout Palestine. The linchpin of these alliances was the ability of "notables"—the more powerful families—to provide the weaker ones with economic and political benefits in return for supporting the interests of the notables at

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the local level and providing political support when called on. (U)

Political control of the West Bank by the notables was consolidated in the late 19th century when, following the enactment of the Ottoman Land Reform Act in 1858, the notables claimed ownership of Palestine's prime agricultural land—much of which had until then been considered common property. (U)

When the British came to Palestine as mandate authorities shortly after World War I, they were confronted by two competing power centers, the Husayni and the Nashashibi families. The British at first attempted to install a bureaucracy staffed by locals who had no tie to either competing group, in an effort to dilute the two families' control. This gambit failed and by the mid-1920s the British returned to the Ottoman pattern of dealing directly with family heads. They tried to maintain a balance between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis by dividing patronage: the Nashashibis were given important regional posts, including the office of mayor of Jerusalem, while a Husayni was appointed mufti of Jerusalem, giving that family access to the not inconsiderable patronage associated with the Muslim religious establishment. (U)

Social and economic changes in the late 1920s and early 1930s posed the next threat to the notables' power. The population of the port cities of Haifa, Jaffa, and Acre almost doubled as an influx of European capital provided employment opportunities for Arab laborers, clerks, and professionals. A wave of political activism soon followed. A thriving Communist Party—with both Arabs and Jews in its leadership—developed in Haifa and politically active labor unions sprang up in the port cities. (U)

Educated Palestinians became restive with the family-oriented politics and organized political parties on European models. Even younger members of prominent families, disenchanted with the notables' inability to stem the tide of Jewish immigration, enrolled in political parties. (U)

A good example of this trend was the Istiqlal Party founded in the early 1930s by Awni Abd al-Hadi, scion of a prominent Nablus family. Abd al-Hadi rallied

young Palestinians, including some from rival families, to his organization. (U)

The family-oriented politicians fought back, however, and eventually suppressed the Istiqlal Party. That which the notables failed to eliminate was demolished as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Israel took control of the coastal cities, and the labor union activists and other young leaders went into exile, ending what could have been a significant challenge to dominance by the notables. (U)

The Jordanian Interlude

When Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, it already had more than three decades of experience in Palestinian politics. During the mandate period, King Abdallah of Jordan had constructed alliances with prominent Palestinian families and drew on their leadership to staff the Jordanian administration in the West Bank and to represent that area in Jordan's political institutions. Abdallah and his grandson, King Hussein, strengthened the most conservative elements of West Bank society as a bulwark against the spread of radicalism. The Jordanian 1957 ban on political parties—which had sprung up in the early days of Jordanian rule—drove younger politicians underground, ending another threat to the notables' political control. (U)

On the eve of the Israeli occupation in 1967, the West Bank was one of the most politically conservative areas in the Arab world. The cause was the predominance of political alliances based on family ties and the absence of the formal organizations that initiated political change elsewhere in the Arab world—political organizations, military groups, labor unions, and student associations. Moreover there was no areawide leadership; the West Bank was more a collection of urban fiefdoms than a coherent political entity. (C)

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*Nablus*

Contemporary Politics in the West Bank

The 11 years of Israeli occupation have brought dramatic social and political change to the West Bank. Many West Bank workers have moved from the agricultural sector to wage labor jobs in the urban areas of the West Bank and in Israel. The area's high rate of education also began to show up in changing employment patterns. A salaried, professional class—many employed by the Israeli military government and UNRWA—appeared in large numbers for the first time in the West Bank. According to Israeli Government figures, 18 percent of the West Bank labor force are white collar workers. (C)

Social and political changes during the Israeli occupation undermined the political power of the notable families. The notables, under attack for their failure to prevent the “disaster” of 1948, their collaboration with the generally unpopular Jordanian occupation, and their impotence in the face of the Israeli occupation, gradually lost stature in the eyes of most West Bankers. (U)

More mundane factors also contributed to the notables' decline. Licenses, permits, and other services under the Israelis are usually available upon application, and West Bankers no longer need the patronage of the great families to obtain basic government services, as they often did under the British and the Jordanians. (C)

Although these changes have eroded the influence of the great families, they have not weakened the overall social and political importance of kinship ties. Most Arab laborers commute to their jobs in Israel and return to their villages at night or on weekends. The same is often true for the West Bankers employed in the local urban areas. Thus, most West Bank workers remain tied to their villages, and traditional institutions and political attitudes or organizations normally associated with the modernization process have been late in developing. (U)

Nor has the political vacuum left by the reduced influence of notable families been filled by formal political organizations. This is due in large measure to the Israeli military government's policy of prohibiting any kind of West Bank areawide associations. Political parties are specifically banned. Even apolitical organizations such as agricultural marketing cooperatives were at one time banned because the Israelis feared they could evolve into regional political forums. West Bank leaders who appear to be developing areawide followings often are deported.⁴ (S)

As a result, the West Bank today stands half in and half out of the modern political world. The ground has been broken for the emergence of organizations and attitudes associated with modernization, but the absence of any institutional outlet for political expression forces the West Banker to continue to look to the family and clan structure for political expression. (S)

Thus, West Bank politics today are centered on local-level offices, and kinship ties remain a key factor in the political equation. (S)

Political Activity on the Local Level

Elections for village and municipal councils⁵ have been held several times under the Israeli military government administration. The most recent village elections—November 1975—involved 57 separate village elections, in which 986 candidates contested 474 council seats. Municipal elections were held in 24 cities in April 1976. There were 514 candidates—including four women—competing for 188 council seats. (U)

The village and municipal elections were held under Jordanian election law, modified by the Israelis to permit women to vote and run for office. Almost 33,000 women were eligible to vote in the municipal elections, and one study indicated that 68 percent of

⁴ A study completed by the American Friends Service Committee claims that Israel deported over 1,500 West Bankers between 1967 and 1976, almost all of them for political activism. (U)

⁵ Municipalities are defined as those so designated under the 1955 Jordanian Law of Municipalities. In 1965, the Jordanians amended the law to provide for elections in villages: a village was defined as any locality not designated a municipality but having more than 800 inhabitants. These definitions have apparently been maintained by the Israeli military government. (C)



Ramallah

those eligible voted. Overall, turnout for the municipal elections was quite high—almost 73 percent. (U)

These local elections demonstrated the persistence of kinship ties. In the village elections, clans dominated the council slates, and voting took place along family lines. Although the municipal elections were more open, and the notable families lost ground, the kinship system continued to operate there also. Clan support was crucial for many of those who won. Hebron's mayor, Fahd Qawasmah, for example, probably owed his victory to clan backing, even though the Qawasmahs are a largely rural grouping, never numbered among the notable families. Similarly in Ramallah, where outspoken pro-PLO supporter Karim Khalaf was elected, clan politics played a large part.

The following account of Ramallah's clan politics offers an insight into the workings of the system:

The Ramallah municipality was composed of one member from each clan....Although the representatives were to represent the town as a whole, each clan sang the praises of its own members on the council, deriving satisfaction and pride in what he did for the town. Tradition also dictated that if the mayor was from the Hadaduh subtribe, then the vice mayor would be from the Hamayil and vice versa. During the mayoralty election a great deal of clan solidarity and clan alliances took place. (U)

It is the nonnotable clans and extended families of this kind whose influence is of growing importance in West Bank politics. Conservative and suspicious of change, these clans nonetheless are Palestinian nationalists and in many instances are pro-PLO. (C)

The influence of clans has been enhanced by the persistence of regional and religious rivalries in the area. Strong antagonisms persist between Nablus and Hebron, Tulkarm/Jenin and Nablus, and between the West Bank and Gaza. These differences have caused problems in West Bank affairs; the mayors, for

instance, had difficulty agreeing on a West Bank delegation to go to Saudi Arabia for the funeral of King Faysal, and aid programs intended for Palestinians in Lebanon were never really effective because of regional differences. (S)

These divisions are increased by religious rivalries between the predominantly Sunni Muslim West Bankers and the small but influential Christian population centered in Bethlehem and the towns surrounding Jerusalem. The Christians were routinely discriminated against under the Jordanians and are not eager to return to Muslim hegemony. They are, thus, suspicious of the PLO, which they view as being a largely Muslim organization. (The PLO is apparently aware of this problem and has attempted to reassure West Bank Christians by placing prominent Christian deportees—including at one time an Anglican clergyman from Ramallah—on the PLO Executive Committee.) Ironically, the Christians now look to their former antagonists, the Jordanians, for support, and



Hebron

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These regional and religious differences have reinforced the parochial and conservative tendencies of the clans, and make more difficult the emergence of areawide political leadership. The mayors are reluctant to take on a wider leadership role because:

- Many are reluctant to break with the family/clan structure.
- They do not wish to antagonize the Israeli military government by taking on a more overt political role.
- They retain the image of low-level functionaries that they had under the Jordanians.
- Mayors do not control the kind of patronage that would help them develop a broader following. (S)

The New Class

Despite the hold of traditional political structures, a new political leadership is slowly developing in the West Bank. It is centered on the area's professional and administrative class. Should the ban on political activity be lifted, this class—already politically active—would probably play a key role in the West Bank's political development. (S)

As it is, this group has engaged in some political expression through its societies, clubs, and professional associations. An examination of the first statement issued by West Bankers condemning the Camp David accords, for example, shows that following the signatures of several mayors and municipal figures are groups like the Family Union of Bethlehem, the Doctor's Association of Tulkarm, the Union of Welfare Societies, the Arab Orthodox Club of Bayt Sahur, the Al-Bireh Housing Society, and so on. Two of the most influential clubs, according to Israeli sources, are the Jerusalem-based Arab Graduates Association, headed by Dr. Amin al-Khatib, and the Professional

Unions Club, headed by civil engineer Ibrahim Daqqaq. These organizations already act as surrogate political parties, and some could develop into parties if organizations were permitted on the West Bank. (S)

The professional class is outspokenly nationalist. Its statements emphasize the importance of Palestinian unity. In private conversations its leaders stress the political losses the Palestinians have suffered because of splits and divisions in the community. The West Bank professionals, therefore, support the PLO because of the organization's symbolic political importance as a representative of unity. At times West Bank professionals seem angry at or disappointed by the PLO, but few are willing to suggest that West Bankers try to formulate an alternative. (S)

There are few strong ideological sympathies evident among professional groups. There is little evidence, for example, of any support for Baathist doctrines. Communists, encouraged by close ties with Israel's predominantly Arab Communist party (RAKAH), seem better organized and more effective than any other ideological strain and are said to be in the forefront of the anti - Camp David movement. (S)

There is a hint of a developing "West Bank" identity among professionals and the growth of a tendency to see West Bankers as somehow separate from other Palestinians. Despite their emphasis on Palestinian unity, many West Bankers might agree with the West Bank shopkeeper who said: "It's not the same for the man who gets the whipping as for the one who counts the strokes." This tendency is fed by a feeling, common among West Bankers, that wealthy Arab states are lax in providing support for those under occupation. (S)

The West Bank Palestinians are culturally conditioned to viewing so-called national affairs—defense and foreign policy, for example—as being the province of an outside elite—Ottoman, British, or Jordanian. In part this conditioning has been responsible for the reluctance of West Bank figures, like the mayors, to attempt to secure a regionwide role for themselves. Whatever the area's political future, it is likely that West Bankers will continue to look to outside forces for guidance. The two most influential forces will probably be Jordan and the PLO. (S)

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Jordan's Role Today

Jordan retains considerable day-to-day influence in West Bank affairs. Jordanian law is used to administer the area's Arab inhabitants, the Jordanian curriculum is used in the schools, and Amman continues to pay the salaries of civil servants in the West Bank who were on the Jordanian payroll before 1967. Jordan also provides funding in the form of guaranteed loans for West Bank municipalities, and Jordanian chambers of commerce on the West Bank serve as unofficial consulates, issuing passports and other documentation to West Bankers who want to travel. (C)

Politically, Amman continues to deal with the prominent families whom it encouraged from 1950 through 1967, although the Jordanians appear to be coming around to the view that the notables are less and less influential. Figures like former Governors of Jerusalem Anwar Khatib and Anwar Nusaybah remain the point men for Jordanian influence on the West Bank. Some other channels for political influence include:

- Special interest societies such as the Higher Muslim Council, headed by Sheikh Hilmi Muhtasib, and the *Waqf* (religious lands) organizations in Jerusalem. Jordan funnels substantial aid money through these groups, whose influence is still strong. In particular, the *Waqf* is especially influential because of its control over large amounts of land. The *al-Maqasid al-Khayriyyah*, a Jerusalem charitable organization, is also used to rally support for Amman's policies.

- The West Bank's fledgling merchant class is an outlet for Jordan's influence. West Bank businessmen have relied on Jordanian banks for critical business services since 1967 when all Arab financial institutions on the West Bank were closed. Many of the West Bank's most prominent business families—the Tazizs of East Jerusalem, Bandaks of Bethlehem, and Masris of Nablus—also have businesses on the East Bank. Hikmat al-Masri is reported to have contracts for supplying goods to the Jordanian Army as well. Many of the businessmen want to develop a strong Jordanian presence in the West Bank as a counterweight to the PLO, whose radical doctrines frighten many merchants.

- Similarly, Jordan has a big say in the export of the West Bank's agricultural produce, much of which is shipped through Amman to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states. The Jordanians are not hesitant to deny export permits for political reasons.

- Jordan's political views also reach many West Bankers via Jordanian television and radio and through the East Jerusalem newspaper, *Al-Quds*, which is generally believed to be financed by King Hussein. (S)

It is not clear how much of this influence translates into political support for Jordan, however. The overt hostility many of the mayors demonstrated toward Amman after the mayoral elections in 1976 has abated, and most have visited Jordan within the past year. Jordan is still viewed by many West Bankers as having the best chance of ending the Israeli occupation, and this results in some support from Amman. (S)

There remain antagonisms, however. Most West Bankers have unpleasant memories of the 1950-67 period of Jordanian rule. Palestinians, although represented in the Jordanian Government at all levels, were second-class citizens and have no desire to return to that role. Moreover, the Jordanian Army acted much like an army of occupation on the West Bank, and area residents are not eager to see it return. Jordan is also disliked for its role in suppressing the Fedayeen during the 1970-71 civil war in Jordan. To many West Bankers, the savage Jordanian suppression of the guerrillas symbolized an implacable Jordanian dislike of all Palestinians, including West Bankers. Although economic and security concerns might dictate close connections with Jordan, West Bankers will resist a return to the conditions existing before 1967. (S)

The Palestine Liberation Organization and the West Bank

West Bankers accept the PLO as their spokesman, although many have doubts about the PLO's current leadership and its policies. West Bank Christians, for example, were appalled by the PLO's role in the Lebanese civil war. (U)

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PLO attempts to build an areawide clandestine political organization on the West Bank have been quickly and vigorously uprooted by the Israelis. Recent terrorist incidents in the West Bank suggest that the PLO may have had some success in building a clandestine guerrilla organization, however. (S)

The PLO has attempted to keep up political contacts with the West Bankers by appointing prominent deportees to the PLO Executive Committee, but there is no day-to-day mechanism for keeping the PLO leadership and the West Bank in touch. Thus, West Bankers often seem confused and uncertain about PLO policies. (S)

The PLO has probably had the most success building potential support among the West Bank's large student population. West Bankers have long supported quality education, and the number of students is growing. Schooling is compulsory for nine years, and those desiring to can continue for three more years. The Israeli military government and some international voluntary organizations provide high-quality vocational education for a large number of students. (S)

There are two recently established four-year colleges, Bir Zeit in Ramallah, and Bethlehem University; and many West Bankers attended universities abroad. These schools often serve as gathering places for political demonstrations organized by students, and it is here that the PLO finds its most outspoken supporters. (S)

The PLO also is occasionally able to express its views through the Jerusalem dailies, *al-Fajr* and *al-Shaab*. *Al-Fajr* in particular is reported to receive funds from the PLO, and its editorial policy usually reflects the PLO line. (S)

The West Bank and the Camp David Accords

Despite initial interest and private endorsements from some notables, almost all influential West Bank figures have ruled out any participation in the Camp David framework. They cite two main reasons for their reluctance:



Bir Zayt Campus

Secret

- The framework does not provide for PLO participation, and the West Bankers are unwilling to cause splits in the Palestinian movement by usurping the PLO's role as negotiator. Many also probably feel intimidated by PLO warnings to West Bankers not to participate.

- They are afraid of being isolated and outmaneuvered in the negotiations with Israel over the "autonomy" framework, particularly in the absence of a Jordanian commitment to join the negotiations. Many moderate West Bankers have told US officials in private that they would participate if Amman also joined, but without such a "cover" few if any moderates are willing to take the risks of negotiating alone. Some also want a prominent US role. (S)

Moreover, West Bankers of all persuasions are put off by the limited prospects for Palestinian self-determination offered by the Camp David framework and are upset by the framework's failure to deal with the 1948 refugees. (S)

Not surprisingly, the most vocal opposition to the accords comes from the West Bank's student population, particularly the Bir Zeit University student body. The area's professional class has also overwhelmingly rejected any role in the Camp David framework and has been joined by several of the more radical mayors, notably Ramallah's Karim Khalaf and Nablus' Bassam Shaka. (S)

The early November rally in Nablus is a measure of the moderates' despair. Sponsored by the usually moderate (and pro-Egyptian) Masri family, the rally produced a number of extreme statements and condemned the Camp David accords while endorsing the results of the Baghdad Summit. (S)

Only Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj, Ramallah lawyer Aziz Shihadah, and old-line pro-Hashemite Anwar Khatib, among major West Bank figures, remain privately interested in the Camp David accords. But even these few acknowledge that, unless Jordan joins, there is little prospect that influential West Bankers would participate in the self-governing authority. (S)

Most West Bankers are reluctant to speculate about what would happen if Egypt and Israel went ahead and negotiated for West Bank autonomy without Jordan, but few believe that any prominent West Bankers would join the negotiations. Egypt might be able to enlist some of its small group of West Bank followers—perhaps led by Nablus notable Abd al-Rauf Faris—but clearly could not count on a substantial following, particularly if the PLO warned West Bankers to stay out. (S)

The largely negative West Bank reaction to Camp David points up once again that—apart from a desire to end the Israeli occupation and a widespread acknowledgment that the PLO is their legitimate representative—West Bankers have little in the way of shared political goals. The political, personal, and regional rivalries that have long dominated the area's politics continue to plague attempts at unity. (S)

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The Gaza Strip: A Primer

An Intelligence Assessment

Secret

March 1979

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The Gaza Strip: A Primer (U)

An Intelligence Assessment

*Information as of 16 March 1979 has been used
in preparing this report.*

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Comments and queries are welcome and should be
directed to the author of [redacted]

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The Gaza Strip: A Primer (U)

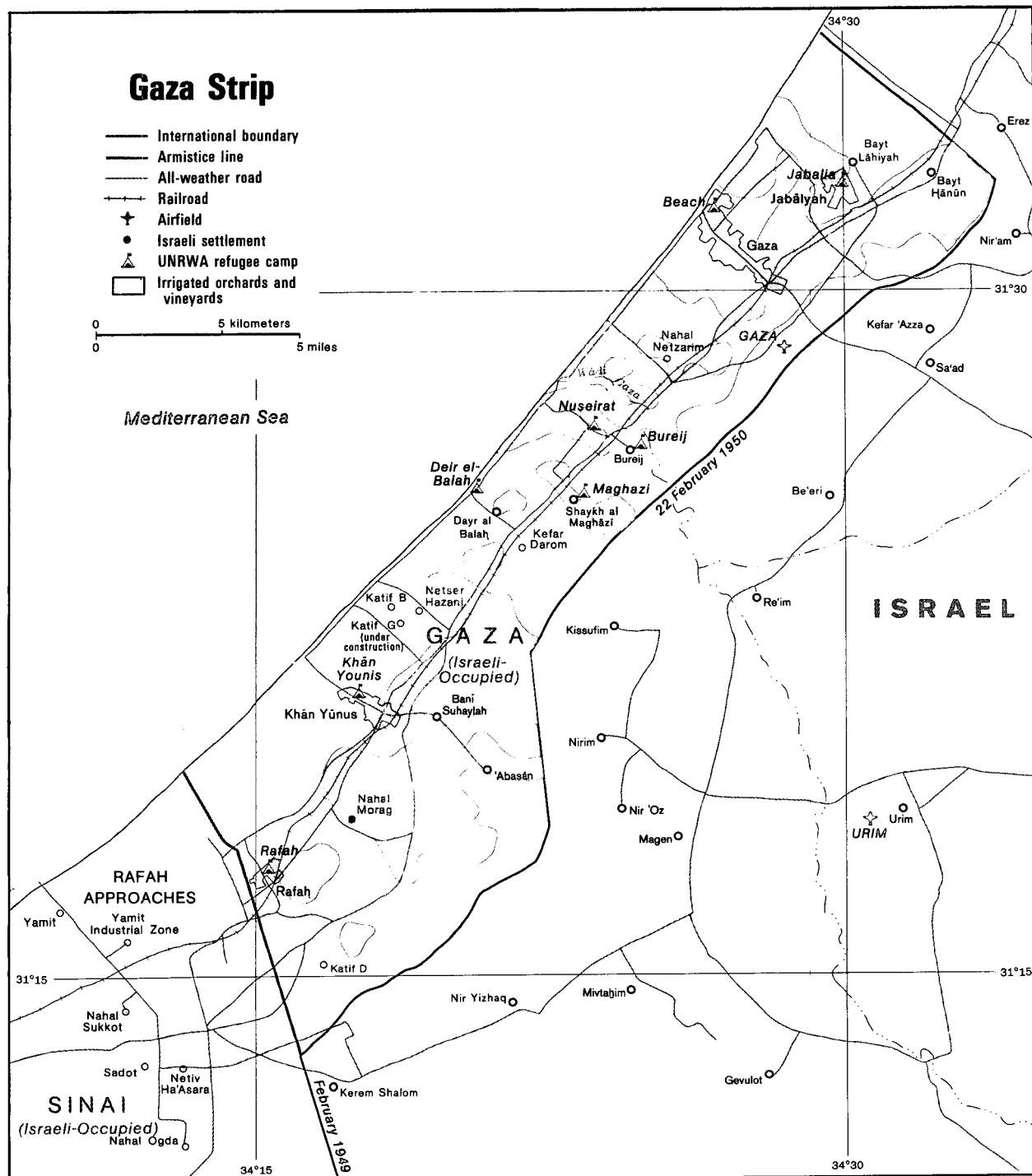
Summary

While the Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations have tended to address Gaza and the West Bank together, the two areas are quite different. For example, an estimated 80 percent of Gaza's more than 400,000 residents are Palestinian refugees—or their offspring—and about 44 percent of the West Bank's 700,000 residents are refugees. Gaza is also a political anomaly. Once a district of Palestine, the area has since 1948 been a questionable spoil of war detached from any larger entity. Today Israel administers Gaza, but does not regard it in the same emotional or historical light as it does the West Bank. Nevertheless, Israel, for security reasons, believes it must retain a military presence in Gaza for the indefinite future. Egypt advances no claim to sovereignty over Gaza, yet it considers Gaza its responsibility because of its former role as administrator of the territory. (S)

President Sadat's search for creditable Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza to participate in negotiations to establish a local self-governing entity has so far been unsuccessful. The traditional Gazan elite—led by members of the Shawwa clan—is tempted by the offer of autonomy, but it is shackled by refugee support for the Palestine Liberation Organization, which opposes the accords. Political dynamics in Gaza are essentially a struggle between these two groups. The PLO hardliners so far have the upper hand on the question of negotiations by reason of their numbers and their ability to intimidate opponents. (S NF)

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20 April 1979

SUBJECT: Some Thoughts on Bringing the Palestinians into the
Autonomy Negotiations

The following is a summary of some thoughts on Palestinian views
of the upcoming autonomy negotiations [redacted]

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Generally, the PLO would not be opposed to giving tacit approval to Gazans and West Bankers to participate in the autonomy negotiations and process, even if the exercise only resulted in a negotiation of the question of sovereignty after the five year autonomy period, if they believed that Begin honestly would negotiate sovereignty. They believe, however, that Begin's concept of autonomy is essentially personal, relating to culture, education and the like, but not to territory. Begin's comments and actions lead the PLO to believe that Begin sees the ultimate Palestinian entity as some sort of "Bantustan." They cite Begin's position on settlements and land and water rights as proof of his unwillingness to consider sovereignty at some stage. If the USG could get Begin to show some flexibility on these issues, [redacted] believes Arafat would be inclined to give his tacit approval to enter the autonomy process.

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Signs of flexibility would be the "Dayan Plan" of "thickening" existing settlements, without starting any new ones and the control of land and water by a committee composed of Israelis and Palestinians, rather than just Israelis. This would be a sign that the question of sovereignty was not a foregone conclusion.

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[redacted] also believes that if the President could find some way—possibly by sending a high level unofficial envoy to Arafat—to assure the PLO that the US would pursue Palestinian rights in the West Bank and Gaza with the same vigor we pursued Egyptian rights in the Sinai, the PLO would be even more inclined to give its approval.

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